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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (thematic cluster I, Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General) (A/70/348/Add.8 and Corr.1). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 10 March 2016.

2. The proposed resources for the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, relating to Burundi, would be in addition to the resource requirements for special political missions included in the main report of the Secretary-General (A/70/348), which provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2016 for 35 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. The specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and for the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, are covered in the five addendums to the report (A/70/348/Add.1-5). The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in section XX of its resolution 70/248, had endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports of the Advisory Committee and had approved a total amount of

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$567,252,400 against the provision of special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

II. Mandate and resource requirements for 2016

A. Mandate and planning

3. The Security Council, in its resolution 2248 (2015) of 12 November 2015, welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Adviser on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, to work with the Government of Burundi and other concerned stakeholders, as well as subregional, regional and other international partners, in support of an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflict and in support of national efforts to build and sustain peace. In the same resolution, the Council also invited the Secretary-General to deploy a team in Burundi to coordinate and work with the Government of Burundi, the African Union and other partners to assess the situation and develop options to address political and security concerns. In addition, the Council requested the Secretary-General to update the Council within 15 days, including by presenting options, on the future presence of the United Nations in Burundi. In his letter dated 1 December 2015 (S/2015/926) to the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General provided a review of the situation in Burundi and two proposed options for consideration by the Council, namely, either a multidimensional integrated peacekeeping operation under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations or a fully-fledged integrated special political mission. The Secretary-General also recommended in his letter that the Council review the mandate of the United Nations presence as the situation on the ground evolved. At the time of writing the present report, the Council had taken no further action with respect to the future presence of the United Nations in Burundi.

B. Resource requirements for 2016

4. The proposed resource requirements for 2016 for the newly established Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General (thematic cluster I), relating to Burundi, amount to $9,435,200 (net) (see table 1). The Secretary-General indicates in his report that, pending the preparation and submission of the present budget proposal, the initial requirements of the Office of the Special Adviser are being met through a commitment authority of the Secretary-General in the amount of $1,631,100, under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 70/250 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2016-2017, which would be reversed following the decision of the Assembly on the present report.

5. The Advisory Committee points out that the resource requirements in connection with the current staffing proposal are linked to the location of the Special Adviser, who is currently located in New York (see also paras. 21 and 22 below). The Committee recalls that it has made general comments and recommendations on the location of the special advisers and special envoys in the context of its main report on special political missions (see A/69/628, paras. 63-65).

Table 1
Summary of resource requirements
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015			*Requirements for 2016*		*Variance 2015-2016*	
	Appropriations	*Estimated expenditures*	*Variance under- (over-) expenditures*	*Total requirements*	*Non-recurrent requirements*	*Approved budget 2015*	*Variance*
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)=(1)-(2)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)=(4)-(6)*
Total requirements	–	–	–	**9 435.2**	**217.5**	–	–

Civilian staffing requirements

6. The proposals of the Secretary-General for the Office of the Special Adviser, relating to Burundi, for 2016 are summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2
Staffing requirements

	Positions	*Level*
Approved positions for 2015	–	–
Proposed positions for 2016	49	1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 7 P-5, 7 P-4, 6 P-3, 16 FS, 2 GS, 2 NPO, 5 LL

Abbreviations: USG, Under-Secretary-General; D, Director; P, Professional; FS, Field Service; GS, General Service; NPO, National Professional Officer; LL, Local level.

7. A total of 49 positions are proposed for 2016, for the Office of the Special Adviser, to be located in Burundi and at United Nations Headquarters:

(a) New York (nine positions):

(i) Office of the Special Adviser (5 positions comprising 1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level));

(ii) Political Coordination and Reporting Unit (3 positions comprising 1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 General Service (Other level));

(iii) Department of Political Affairs (1 P-3 to provide backstopping support);

(b) Burundi (40 positions):

(i) Office of the Chief of Staff (5 positions comprising 1 D-2, 1 P-4, 2 National Professional Officers and 1 Field Service);

(ii) Dialogue Unit (6 positions comprising 1 D-1, 2 P-5, 2 P-4 and 1 P-3);

(iii) Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit (5 positions comprising 1 D-1, 2 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 P-3);

(iv) Mission Support Unit (13 positions comprising 1 P-5, 1 P-3, 6 Field Service, 2 Local level, and 3 Drivers (Local level));

(v) Safety and Security Unit (11 positions comprising 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 9 Field Service).

8. With respect to the staff on board as at 29 February 2016, the Advisory Committee was advised, upon enquiry, that 18 positions were encumbered, as follows: 1 USG, 2 D-1, 5 P-5, 3 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 National Professional Officer and 5 Local level.

9. The proposed staffing requirements for 2016 are described in paragraphs 19 to 28 of the report of the Secretary-General. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a proposed organization chart (see annex).

Proposed staffing at United Nations Headquarters (New York)

10. Included in the staffing request of the Secretary-General is a proposal to establish two Public Information Officer positions, one at the P-3 level, to be located in New York in the Office of the Special Adviser, and one at the P-4 level, to be located in Burundi in the Office of the Chief of Staff (A/70/348/Add.8 and Corr.1, paras. 20 and 24), Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Public Information Officer (P-4) in Burundi would develop and implement a communications strategy for the Office of the Special Adviser, develop strategic partnerships with key local partners and supervise national staff responsible for local media monitoring and that the Public Information Officer (P-3) in New York would directly advise the Special Adviser on developments in the media landscape and on his engagement with international and regional media, including social media, draft press statements and organize press conferences. **The Advisory Committee considers that any residual public information tasks that can presumably only be performed in New York should be organized by other professional staff in the Office of the Special Adviser, in collaboration with the Department of Public Information, as required. The Committee therefore recommends against the establishment of the Public Information Officer (P-3) position in New York in the Office of the Special Adviser.**

11. The Secretary-General also proposes the establishment of one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) position to be located in New York within the Africa I Division of the Department of Political Affairs to provide backstopping functions for the Office of the Special Adviser (ibid., para. 22). The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General further proposes the establishment of two additional Political Affairs Officers positions in New York, namely, one in the Office of the Special Adviser and the other in the Political Coordination and Reporting Unit (ibid., paras. 20 (c) and 21 (b)). **The Advisory Committee considers, however, that at this early stage of the work of the Burundi team, the three proposed Political Affairs Officers (1 P-5, and 2 P-4) to be located in New York in both the Office of the Special Adviser and in the Political Coordination and Reporting Unit should be sufficient to handle the workload associated with any necessary backstopping and liaison functions. The Committee therefore recommends against the establishment of one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) position in the Department of Political Affairs for backstopping functions.**

Proposed staffing in Burundi

12. In the Office of the Chief of Staff, the Secretary-General proposes the establishment of a Chief of Staff (D-2) position to lead the team in Burundi (ibid., para. 24). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, in addition to ensuring the effective functioning and strategic direction of the Office, the Chief of

Staff would also be responsible for representational functions and would meet with high-level government officials and other stakeholders, including members of the United Nations country team, when the Special Adviser was not present in the country. **The Advisory Committee has no objection to the establishment of a Chief of Staff (D-2) position in view of the high-level responsibilities involved in this case, which go beyond those of a typical Chief of Staff position.**

13. As noted in paragraph 7 above, the request of the Secretary-General includes the proposed establishment, in Burundi, of a Dialogue Support Unit, comprising six staff positions to be headed by a Principal Political Affairs Officer (D-1), and of a Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit, comprising five staff positions to be headed by a Principal Security Sector Reform Officer (D-1) (ibid., paras. 25 and 26). The Secretary-General indicates that the Head of the Dialogue Support Unit would liaise with stakeholders, including the Government of Burundi and regional and subregional organizations and that the Head of the Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit would coordinate activities concerning disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and security sector reform. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that advice in support of the political dialogue and matters related to advice on security sector issues were considered to be issues that were interrelated but distinct. **The Advisory Committee considers that, at this early stage of the presence of the United Nations, the activities of the Dialogue Support Unit and of the Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit would be phased in gradually and would require intense coordination and collaboration among the responsible staff, as the situation on the ground continued to evolve. The Committee is therefore of the view that, for the time being, the respective functions of the two Units should be performed under one umbrella, by one consolidated unit, under the supervision of one Principal Officer (D-1), to be supported by staff with the required political and/or security sector-related expertise. The Committee therefore recommends the establishment of one, but not both, of the Principal Officer (D-1) positions.**

14. The Secretary-General also proposes the establishment of a Security Sector Reform Officer (P-3) position for the Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit to support the Unit in designing a strategy for disarmament and the security sector (ibid., para. 26 (e)). For the Dialogue Support Unit, the Secretary-General proposes the establishment of a Political Affairs Officer (P-4) position for the purpose of working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) country office and, among other responsibilities, ensuring that human rights information is integrated into reports to the Security Council and that the issue of human rights is mainstreamed into the Office's activities. The Advisory Committee notes that these functions also form part of the responsibilities of the position of the Unit's proposed Human Rights Officer (P-4). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Human Rights Officer would also perform liaison functions with the OHCHR office in Burundi since OHCHR would not be expected to provide backstopping to the Office of the Special Adviser.

15. **In view of its comments in paragraph 13 above, in which it recommends the merger of the Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit and the Dialogue Support Unit, and considering the active engagement on the ground of a number of agencies, funds, and programmes of the United Nations system that cover a wide range of political and human rights issues, the Advisory Committee believes that security sector-related tasks could be performed, at**

the present time, by the Senior Security Sector Officers (P-5) and that tasks related to human rights report drafting and liaising should be performed by the proposed Human Rights Officer (P-4) who would have the required expertise. The Committee therefore recommends against the establishment of one Security Sector Reform Officer (P-3) position and against the establishment of one Political Affairs Officer (P-4) position.

16. The proposed staffing requirements of the Mission Support Unit, comprising 13 international and national staff members, is described in paragraph 27 of the report of the Secretary-General, and includes a variety of functions which, considering the small size of the mission, overlap with services that will be provided remotely from the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, Uganda. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Centre would perform transactions for finance and human resources functions and has, to-date, provided support in connection with the onboarding of international staff, the travel of close protection officers to Burundi, the deployment of staff on temporary duty assignment and cashier functions. The Committee was furthermore informed that no costs relating to the provision of such services had been included in the proposed budget for 2016, as it was not anticipated that the Centre would require additional resources for this specific purpose.

17. **With regard to the small size of the operation at this stage and the finance and human resources support readily available through the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, the Advisory Committee recommends that the staffing requirements of the Mission Support Unit be streamlined, as follows:**

(a) **The Committee recommends against the establishment of two separate positions, namely, of a Finance Officer (Field Service) and of a Human Resources Officer (Field Service); and recommends the establishment of one Administrative Officer (Field Service) position to provide on-site support in the areas of finance and human resources to augment the support provided by the Centre;**

(b) **The Committee recommends against the establishment of one Information Systems Assistant (Field Service) position, in view of the proposed Information Systems Officer (Field Service) position;**

(c) **The Committee recommends against the establishment of one of the three proposed Driver (Local level) positions, in view of the limited need for such a function for such a small operation.**

18. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the staffing proposed by the Secretary-General for the Office of the Special Adviser, subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 10, 11, 13, 15 and 17 above. Any related non-post resources associated with the recommendations, including resources under official travel, should also be adjusted.**

Operational costs

19. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the projected operational requirements for 2016 for the Office of the Special Adviser, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3
Operational costs
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	*Approved budget 2015*	*Requirements for 2016*		*Variance*
		Total requirements	*Non-recurrent requirements*	
Operational costs				
Consultants	–	232.6	–	232.6
Official travel	–	1 569.0	–	1 569.0
Facilities and infrastructure	–	1 718.4	–	1 718.4
Ground transportation	–	180.4	–	180.4
Communications	–	554.5	–	554.5
Information technology	–	230.7	17.5	230.7
Medical	–	204.0	–	204.0
Other supplies, services and equipment	–	252.1	200.0	252.1
Total	**–**	**4 941.7**	**217.5**	**4 941.7**

Consultants

20. The Advisory Committee was informed that an amount of $232,600 for 2016 for four consultants was requested to provide specialized knowledge and expertise to the Special Adviser, as required, primarily with regard to the following: (a) lessons learned and good practices from dialogue processes in other countries; (b) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration/security sector reform programming and expertise in special technical areas; and (c) legal and constitutional expertise in support of dialogue processes. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the work in connection with these proposed consultancies is duplicative as such expertise would be expected to be provided by expert senior staff, specifically by staff in the Dialogue Support Unit and the Disarmament and Security Advisory Unit, which the Advisory Committee has recommended should be merged (see para. 13 above). The Committee therefore recommends a reduction of $116,300, or 50 per cent, in the proposed resources for 2016 under consultants.**

Official travel

21. The proposed requirements under official travel for 2016 amount to $1.57 million. The Advisory Committee was informed that these resources would provide for official travel for the Security Council to visit Burundi in January 2016 ($332,000) and for the Special Adviser and his staff ($1,237,000) to undertake regular visits to Burundi for consultations with government officials and other national and international stakeholders and to travel regionally and internationally for consultations with Member States, United Nations offices, the African Union, the East African Community and non-governmental organizations. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that it was envisioned that the Special Adviser would undertake 66 trips in 2016, ranging from one to five days, and would be

accompanied by three staff members on most occasions. In this connection, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that it was not possible, at present, for the Special Adviser to be located in the country and that this was the reason for the travel requirement. With regard to the travel of staff on temporary duty assignment from other missions, who are available to travel to the team in Burundi during the first months of the operation of the mission, the Committee was informed that the requirement of $248,000 for that purpose would provide for the travel of 22 such staff for a combined duration of 643 days, during the period from January to May 2016.

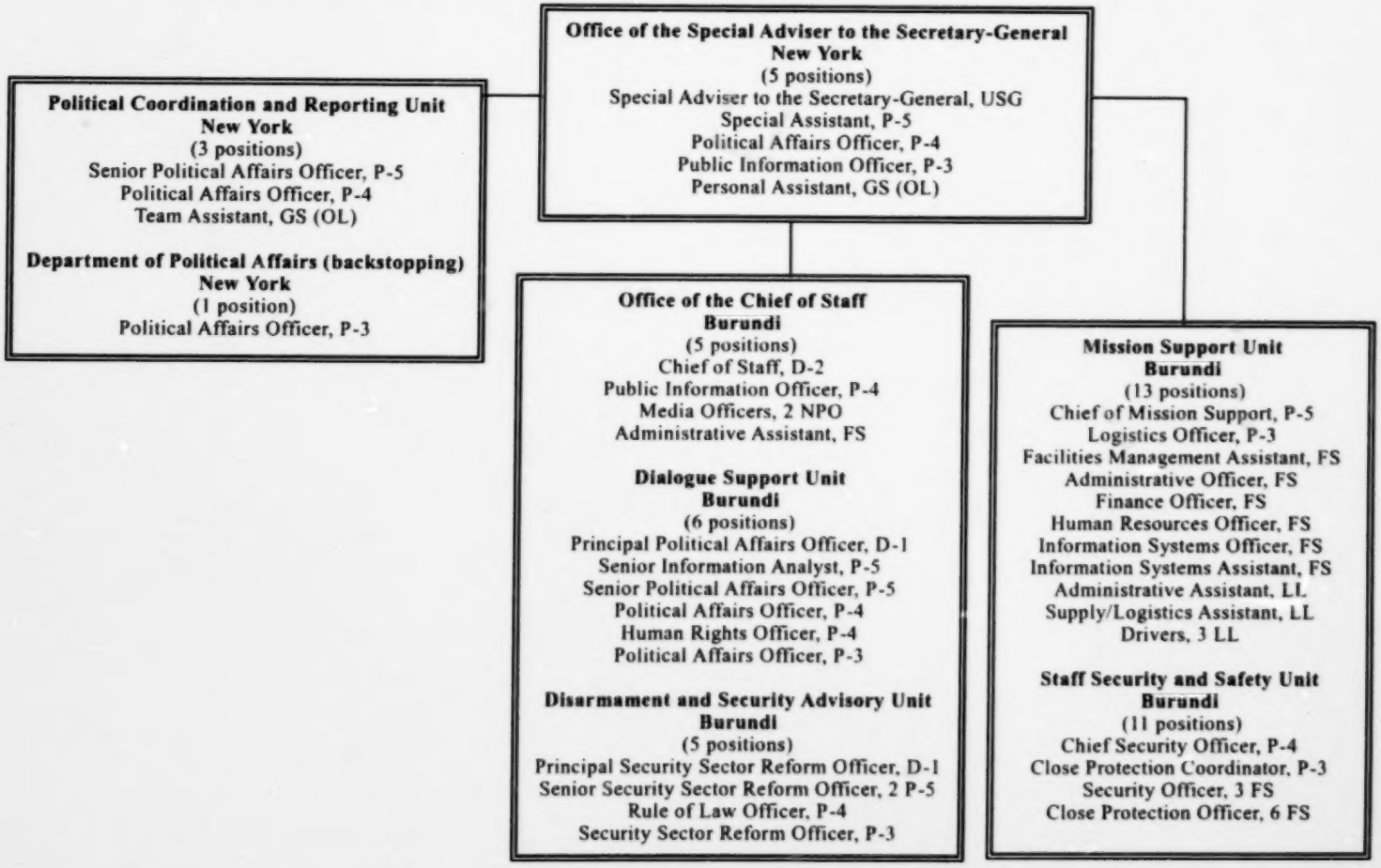
22. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes that resources for official travel must be utilized judiciously and that trips should be consolidated, when operationally appropriate. Other means of communication, including videoconferencing, should be utilized and the requirements for accompanying staff should be reduced, as appropriate.**

III. Recommendations for action required of the General Assembly

23. The resource requirements for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General (thematic cluster I), which are set out in paragraphs 30 (a) and (b) of the report of the Secretary-General, are not included in the resources for special political missions, approved by the General Assembly, in section XX of its resolution 70/248. **Subject to its recommendations contained in paragraphs 10, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 20 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the budget in the amount of $8,492,100 net ($9,916,500 gross) for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the period from January to December 2016; and approval of a charge in the amount of $8,492,100 (net of staff assessment) against the provision for special political missions appropriated under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.**

Annex

Proposed organization chart for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, 2016



Abbreviations: USG, Under-Secretary-General; D, Director; P, Professional; FS, Field Service; GS (OL), General Service (Other level); LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer.